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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 PA-01 ICA-11 /046 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1701
INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SF
SUBJECT: INKATHA TO MONITOR LABOR CODES

1. SUMMARY: CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI'S
INKATHA ORGANIZATIONIS PLANNING A CAMPAIGN TO FORCE FOREIGN
COMPANIES TO ABIDE BY BUSINESS CODES FOR FAIR LABOR PRACTICES.
THIS STRAGEGY APPEARS TO BE A PART OF A GREATER POLITICAL ACTION
ROLE FOR INKATHA SPURRED BY THE RESULTS OF A POLL
RELEASED AT A RECENT CONFERENCE IN WEST GERMANY INDICATING
STRONG SUPPORT FOR INKATHA AMONG SOUTH AFRICA'S BLACKS.
SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONISTS HAVE RESPONDED
TO BUTHELEZI'S STATEMENTS BY WARNING HIM TO KEEP HANDS OFF
LABOR MATTERS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A PRESS INTERVIEW ON JULY 7, BUTHELEZI STATED THAT HIS
INKATHA MOVEMENT WAS CONSIDERING ACTION TO FORCE FOREIGN
COMPANIES TO IMPLEMENT TO THE LETTER THE VARIOUS BUSINESS
CODES ON FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES. HE SAID THAT MANY BLACKS
FEEL THAT THE VOLUNTARY CODES RELATING TO OVERSEAS IN-
VESTMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA, INCLUDING THE EEC, THE SULLIVAN,
AND THE CANADIAN CODES, SHOULD BE MONITORED MORE CLOSELY
IN SOUTH AFRICA. BUTHELEZI SAID THAT ADECISION ON
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STRATEGY MAY BE MADE AT THE ORGANIZATION'S ANNUAL MEETING
AT ULUNDI, NATAL THIS WEEK.

3. OTHER PRESS ACCOUNTS STATE THAT MR. RONNIE WEBB,
PRESIDENT OF THE TRADE UNION COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA AND
MR. BEN NICHOLSON, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF METAL
AND BUILDING UNIONS WARNED BUTHELEZI TO KEEP HIS HANDS OFF

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LABOR MATTERS. BOTH LEADERS STATE THAT THEIR ORGANIZATIONS
ARE DEVELOPING FAIR LABOR PRACTICE CODES OF THEIR OWN,
AND THAT BUTHELEZI'S ENTRANCE INTO THE LABOR FIELD WOULD
ONLY "STIR UP A HORNET'S NEST." WEBB STATED THAT AS
FAR AS HE KNEW, BUTHELEZI WAS POWERLESS TO FORCE EMPLOYERS
TO IMPLEMENT THE OVERSEAS CODES.

4. INKATHA PUBLICITY CHAIRMAN, GIBSON THULA, RECENTLY TOLD
EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT INKATHA WOULD SOON ENTER INTO A MORE
AGGRESSIVE PERIOD, A "PHASE II", WHERE THOSE PORTIONS OF THE
INKATHA PLATFORM CONCERNING EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK AND
THE FORMATION OF TRADE UNIONS WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED. HE
SAID THAT DURING BUTHELEZI'S RECENT TRIP TO EUROPE TO
ATTEND THE BERGSTRAESSER CONFERENCE FOR PEACEFUL CHANGE IN
SOUTH AFRICA, HE (THULA) HAD SPENT MUCH OF HIS TIME
CONTACTING INTERNATIONAL LABOR PERSONALITIES. THE GIST
OF THULA'S REPRESENTATIONS TO THESE LABOR LEADERS WAS
THAT INKATHA COULD PROVIDE THE FEEDBACK MECHANISM FOR
ENFORCING THE VARIOUS CODES OF CONDUCT FOR OVERSEAS
CORPORATIONS DOING BUSINESS IN SOUTH AFRICA. THULA PROPOSED
AN ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY, IF AN INKATHA WORKER WERE
PENALIZED FOR DEMANDING THE RIGHTS GUARANTEED BY THE
CODE OF CONDUCT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF A PARTICULAR COMPANY,
INKATHA COULD REPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR BODIES WHICH
IN TURN COULD EXERT PRESSURE ON THE OFFENDING COMPANY
THROUGH ITS GOVERNMENT OR DIRECTLY. THULA STATED THAT
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THE MAJORITY OF INKATHA MEMBERS WERE COUNTED IN THE LABOR
FORCE, AND THE MOVEMENT'S EFFORTS IN THIS FIELD WOULD BE
SERVING ITS CONSTITUENCY. WHEN ASKED, THULA EXPLAINED
THAT THE LOGICAL EXTENTION OF INKATHA'S EFFORTS IN THE
LABOR FIELD WOULD ULTIMATELY BE THE STRIKE AND THE BOYCOTT.

5. COMMENT: WE ASSUME BUTHELEZI'S ANNOUNCEMENT REFERS
TO THE "FEEDBACK MECHANISM" THULA EXPLAINED TO US. IT
MAY WELL BE THAT INKATHA SEES THIS AS ITS BEST COURSE OF
ACTION WITHOUT GOING BEYOND THE UNDEFINED LINE OF ACTIVISM
DRAWN BY THE SAG. THE ALTERNATIVES OF STRIKE OR BOYCOTT
WOULD SEEM AT PRESENT TO BE BEYOND THE CAPABILITY OF
INKATHA AT THIS TIME. BUTHELEZI HAS THE ABILITY TO ORGANIZE
A SHORT (ONE OR TWO DAY) STRIKE OR SPECIFIC LIMITED BOYCOTTS AND
TO RECEIVE NEAR UNANIMOUS SUPPORT FROM ALL STRATAS OF
ZULU SOCIETY. HOWEVER, A COMBINATION OF THE LACK OF
SUFFICIENT SECOND AND THIRD ECHELON INKATHA LEADERS
CAPABLE OF ORGANIZING LONGER STRIKES OR WIDE BOYCOTTS,
COUPLED WITH WIDE-SPREAD UNEMPLOYMENT AND LACK
OF FOOD STOCKPILES OR ADEQUATE SAVINGS ON THE PART OF
MOST BLACK WORKERS, LESSENS THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS OF
ANYTHING MORE PROLONGED OR WIDESPREAD.

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MONITORING OF RECOGNIZED EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES CODES MIGHT
BE TOLERATED BY THE SAG AND STILL CATER TO INKATHA'S
CONSTITUENCY AND TO BLACK OBSERVERS LOOKING TO IT
FOR ACTIVE LEADERSHIP.
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